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Travel through time: ACT in focus

The Year 2001 edition of the ACT Year Book, **Australian Capital Territory In Focus** provides a comprehensive reference for facts and figures on the Territory and surrounding region and was released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) today.

One of the standout features of this edition is a historical timeline detailing major recorded events in the ACT since 1820. This offers a wealth of interesting facts, including that the earliest known Aboriginal settlement in the ACT was in approximately 21,000 BC.

Other interesting ACT highlights include:

People

- In 1999-2000, the ACT experienced the third lowest estimated resident population (ERP) growth rate of all Australian States and Territories at 0.5 per cent. Only South Australia and Tasmania had lower growth rates at 0.4 per cent and -0.1 per cent respectively.
- Comparisons between ERP in 1995 and 2000 show that the strongest growth in Canberra urban areas was in the Gungahlin-Hall Statistical Sub-Division (SSD) (with an average annual rise of 14 per cent), while the lowest growth was recorded in Weston Creek-Stromlo with a fall of 1 per cent.
- The median age of ACT parents in 1999 increased to 30.2 years for mothers (from 28.8 years in 1989) and 32.4 years for fathers (from 31.1 years in 1989).
- The ACT apparent retention rate for students showed 87 per cent of students continued education through years 7 to 12 in 2000, down from 93 per cent in 1999. The national retention rate in 2000 was 72 per cent.
- The ACT had the highest home access to the Internet (48 per cent) of all States and Territories, compared with 33 per cent nationally in 2000.
- The ACT had the highest participation rate in sport or physical activity, with nearly two-thirds (65 per cent) of ACT people aged over 18 years participating, compared with the national rate of 55 per cent.

Business and Economy

- In the year to 30 June 1999, there were 14,700 small businesses operating at some time in the ACT, representing 96 per cent of all businesses in the ACT and 78 per cent of private

sector employment in the ACT.

- The retail industry continued to be a substantial contributor to the ACT economy, with a turnover of \$2,839 million in 1999-2000, an increase of \$270 million (up 11 per cent) from 1998-99.
- The ACT recorded continued growth in the construction industry in 1999-2000, with the total value of building commenced rising by 6 per cent to \$945.8 million from the previous year. The number of new residential buildings commenced in 1999-2000 increased from the previous year to 2,400 (up 22 per cent).
- Over half (52 per cent) of all ACT businesses reported using electronic mail at June 2000, higher than the national level of 37 per cent.
- In 1999-2000, the ACT had the highest gross household disposable income of all States and Territories at \$29,364, compared with the national average of \$21,904.
- Finance commitments (housing, personal, commercial and lease) in the ACT for 1999-2000 rose to \$4,053.6 million, an increase of 22 per cent from the previous year.
- There was a rise of 3,400 (up 15 per cent) in the number of employed people in property and business services in the 12 months to February 2001. Declines were experienced in the industries of retail trade, down 2,900 (12 per cent) and government administration and defence, down 1,700 (4 per cent).

Data is also provided on the Australian Capital Region which extends from Young, Boorowa and Crookwell in the north, to Bombala and the Bega Valley in the south.

Full details are in **Australian Capital Territory in Focus 2001** (cat. no. 1307.8) which is available in all ABS bookshops. If you wish to purchase a copy of this publication, contact the ABS Bookshop in your capital city.

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